

MI Urban & Community Forestry Council
- Minutes of -
Wednesday, March 18th, 2009
Midwest Arborist Supplies office – Grand Rapids

Members present (voting):

Jerry Adams, Pam Blough, Nancy Carpenter, Bert Cregg, Jeff Dunmire, Vic Foerster, Robert Gentry, Bill Lawrence, Bill VanLier

Others present (non-voting):

David Price, Kevin Sayers, Ada Takacs

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Kevin S.

Approval of Agenda:

Vic F. moved to accept the agenda; seconded by Robert G.

Approval of Minutes:

Robert G. moved to accept the previous meeting minutes; seconded by Jeff D.

Public Comment:

None

Council Membership:

Renewing – n/a

New – Pam Blough *Landscape Architect position.*

Next Expiring – Marshall B, Kathy F, Bill V

- Pam was welcomed to council and gave brief background and bio introduction
- Kevin gave overview of council purpose and member roles/responsibilities
- Pam's term expires Spring 2012
- Kevin reported that Kathy F. will be stepping down from her position on the council due to other job/time commitments. Need to i.d. replacement
- Fall expiring members need to contact Kevin to notify of intent to renew term on council or resign after fall meeting.

Action Item(s):

1. Kevin to notify Marshall B. of term expiration after fall meeting.

2. Need suggestions for new Non-Profit representative to replace Kathy F.

Business:

Community Canopy Newsletter:

- Ada T. provided copies of DRAFT spring 09 newsletter for review/comment
- Comments – add following info.
 - new council member (Pam Blough)
 - Tree City USA luncheon
 - new UCF resources from USFS:
 - Tree Owners manual
 - Nat. funding survey of state UCF
 - municipal green infrastructure h.b.
- Changes will be made and final version to be posted on www.mi.gov/dnrucf by April 24

Action Item(s):

1. Kevin/Ada will make edits updates and post to website and send email announcement.

DNR UCF Program display & brochure:

- Kevin set-up newly developed/purchased UCF program display
- Cost was \$375 w/case
- Two versions of companion program brochure shared with group for comment.
- Group preferred simple 8.5"x5.5" version
- Kevin will work with DNR graphics staff to create another DRAFT version to share with group for comment via email
- Goal is to have brochures printed by end of summer to be used with display at numerous events/venues to highlight UCF program and council
- Display is available for loan (contact Kevin)
- Several events mentioned for possible use (Earth Day, TC USA banquet, Enviro ed meetings, GLTE, ASM etc..)

Action Item(s):

1. Kevin will share brochure draft with group
2. Kevin will report availability of final version

Tree City/Tree Line USA 2008

- 118 certified communities, 4 utilities
- Increase of 3 from last year
- 4, 1st time communities (Breckenridge, Clare, Dexter and Sparta)
- Two MI Universities certified as Tree Campus USA (UM and WMU)
- 14 Growth Awards
- several Growth Award applications denied
- Per capita spending is up (\$8.32)
- Press release planned for April 8th
- Map, and list of communities available on web at www.mi.gov/dnrtcusa
- Award luncheon – Okemos, 4/9/09

Action Item(s):

1. Awards to be issued at first-time award luncheon
2. Kevin to mail all other awards
3. Press release scheduled for 4/8

Budget update:

- Official FY09 financial advice from USFS has not yet been received.
- FY09 began October 1 and the 50% cost incurrence has been nearly exhausted
- Possibility that lateness of budget may be due in part to election year issues.
- Anticipate flat or reduced budget from FY08 (\$305K) plus any federal economic stimulus and competitive redesign money.
- DTE funding has been a consistent or increasing lately. Will work to continue this strong partnership.
- Discussed results of 2008, NUCFAC funded budget survey of 50 state UCF programs. Most states rely on federal funds, expect or are seeing declining budgets and are at risk of losing program altogether unless they identify new/additional sources of funding.

Action Item(s):

1. Kevin will report federal FY09 budget info. as we are made aware
2. Kevin will share proposed budget plan for MI UCF after receiving federal advice

MI Municipal Forestry Survey:

- Group discussed need for redoing the

MI municipal survey to reevaluate priority issues for program.

- Last survey done 4yrs ago and original intent was to redo 4-5 yrs. to coincide with revision of program strategic plan, (expires this year).
- Cost for doing online survey is minimal
- Suggestion that we do three surveys, (municipal, non-profit and (education institutions)
- Suggestion to limit questions to 25 and estimated time to 10-15 min
- Bert C., Robert G., Nancy C., and Jerry A. to help revise question sets for survey.
- Goal timeline will be to complete entire survey by end of summer

Action Item(s):

1. Kevin to share current question set with working group for revision
2. Post and announce survey by early July
3. Close and summarize responses by end of August

UCF 5 year Strategic Plan:

- MI UCF plan expires at end of this year
- Plan is no longer officially required by USFS due to new statewide resource assessment/planning process.
- Still need a method for identifying and prioritizing our program issues (esp. qualitative)
- New process being proposed from USFS focuses more on use of geospatial datasets for id of priority areas.
- Urban geospatial process is in place to ID priority areas
- Group recommends using results of MI UCF survey(s) to determine program issues and help create a “Program Strategy” and then combine this with identified priority areas.
- This needs to be done by the fall

Action Item(s):

1. Kevin will suggest date(s) for scheduling a strategic planning session after results of survey are compiled.

Statewide Natural Resource Assessments and Plans

- David Price (DNR) explained the larger

context for new assessment and planning requirements.

- Required through 2008 Farm Bill for states to apply for USFS competitive funds.
Many details unknown at this point. (
- Short timeline for completion (June 2010)
- Seen as a better way to integrate across multiple programs/areas
- Be sure to tie priorities to THEMES in Farm Bill as much as possible.
- Fortunately, most programs have advisory councils to facilitate this planning.
- UCF council needs to have something to DNR planners by beginning of 2010
- UCF priorities (issues and areas) to be compiled into larger state assessment and plan

Action Item(s):

1. *Council to use results from MI UCF survey(s) to create priority issues list*
2. *Kevin to work w/ DNR GIS staff to conduct geospatial "Phase 1 (and 2?) analysis to determine priority areas*
3. *Council strategic planning session to be scheduled for late summer/early fall*
4. *Goal to combine issues and areas lists into one UCF priority strategy document and provide to DNR planners by January 2010.*

Federal Economic Stimulus funding:

- Much confusion about this process (short notices, few details, etc.)
- Money coming from multiple sources with little coordination or clear advice/timelines
- No match required with these funds
- DNR UCF had 4 hours to produce possible projects for consideration. Two requests submitted to DNR mgmt.
 - tree removal money
 - statewide urban landcover mapping/change
- The former made it on the department priority list, the latter did not.
- 3 possible scenarios for MI UCF:
 1. \$1M for tree removal/maintenance grants to communities statewide. Need to develop/modify existing grant process for this.

2. \$200K to be targeted for tree planting in Macomb, Wayne and Monroe counties per USFS direction (related to EAB). NOT PROPOSED BY DNR UCF!
 3. Up to \$150K for use in U.P. counties/communities within the "Slow Ash Mortality" research areas. Funds to be used for conducting inventories, management plans and ash tree removal. (related to EAB) NOT PROPOSED BY DNR UCF
- No funds have been for these projects yet

Action Item(s):

1. *Kevin will share any further details/announcement w/group as we are made aware.*

USFS Competitive Grant Process:

- USFS announced award of 2008-09 Competitive Redesign grants in February
- DNR UCF submitted two (2) proposals both involving Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) analysis.
- Both proposals were approved for award
- One is multi-state with OHDNR and involves web-based results and education component with Eastern Michigan Univ.
- One is MI specific and involves significant tree planting component
- Kevin to send group copies of proposals.
- No funding has been received for either project as of yet

Action Item(s):

1. *Kevin will send group copies of approved proposals*

2009 DTE Foundation Tree Planting Grant awards:

- Awards for 2009 grants have been announced.
- 40 awards totaling \$80K
- Awardee list posted at www.mi.gov/dnrucf

Action Item(s): - N/A

2009-10 Community Forestry Grants (CFG):

- Discussed proposed timeline for this years CFG grant - applications available by late July, application deadline in mid September and awards announced by late October.
- Announcements, and application materials will be made via mail, email, press release and posting to web at www.mi.gov/dnrucf

- Council may need to assist Kevin in redesigning the grant program to accommodate tree removal and pruning should economic stimulus funding come through.
- 1-2 council members may be needed to help review grant applications in September.
- Budget is not known until we have our federal program financial advice and find out about any economic stimulus funds.

Action Item(s):

1. *Kevin will update application forms and, pending stimulus funds, work with council to adjust them to accommodate removal/pruning projects.*
2. *Kevin will keep council updated on funding availability and application availability and other relevant issues as needed.*

Tree USA programs award luncheon:

- Discussed details of upcoming 1st time Tree USA programs award luncheon
- April 9th, 2009 Okemos Conf. Center 11:00-3:00pm
- Michigan Forestry and Park Association (MFPA) who will act as fiduciary for event expenses.
- MFPA will also announce Brevitz scholarship recipients at this event.
- Speakers/guests include:
DNR Forestry Chief,
immediate past chair of National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC), Arbor Day Foundation sending representative, DTE Energy Representative.
- Programs being recognized: Tree Cities, Tree Line Utilities and Tree Campuses
- Anticipate 60 registrants
- Intended as every other year event to formally present awards, hear from relevant speakers and encourage networking.
- Council members encouraged to attend.
- DNR staff photographer to attend.

Action Item(s):

- *Kevin to post pictures on DNR website.*

Proper tree mulching campaign:

- Group discussed need for statewide

campaign to promote proper mulching. Should be done in partnership with multiple other agencies/organizations.

- Several suggestions on other organizations to partner with (MGIA, MSU, regional COGs etc.)
- Topic tabled for further discussion until next meeting

Action Item(s):

N/A

Municipal Tree Ordinance directory:

- Ada T. and Kevin S. have been working to create a searchable directory online of MI community tree ordinances.
- Example ordinances are commonly asked for by small communities looking to create new ordinance .
- Intended to allow anyone to search by community size, type of ordinance community name etc.
- Links would go directly to .pdf versions, or existing links on other website which is hosting ordinance
- Ada shared example (handout) of how information is being arranged.
- Council very supportive of idea
- Suggestion to create categories (sm-lg)
- Goal to post it on DNR UCF website by end of year

Action Item(s):

1. *Ada and Kevin will continue to add to list and create searchable directory on DNR website..*

Misc. Updates:

- State Arbor Day celebration Friday 4/24 in Lansing/Potter Park
- MI Arbor Day Alliance announced new membership drive and has redesigned website www.miarbordayalliance.org
- Maureen M. sent email to council announcing that USFS "Tree Owners Manual" publication from USFS is available online:
www.na.fs.fed.us/urban/treeownersmanual/index.shtml
- Robert G. was happy to report that after much frustration, he has succeeded in conducting an i-TREE (STRATUM and UFORE) analysis of Adrian ANDis

pleasantly surprised with results. Thanks to USFS staff for helping him through tech assist calls. Suggestion was to have Robert G. present at upcoming ASM (and other) events on success of i-Tree.

- Bert C. spoke to MSU Dept. of Forestry Chair (Daniel Keathley) re: lack of support for urban forestry at MSU. Council representatives. should schedule time to meet with Dan to discuss further. Group had good discussion about this problem and ways to address it moving forward. Important to highlight the many grads from MSU program that have gone on to successful positions. Likewise, highlight the competition (or lack of) between remaining forestry schools in country. This will be an agenda topic for next meeting.

Next meeting:

Location – Lansing @ MUCC

November 5th or 12th- tba

Adjourned:

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Kevin Sayers